

# MAPPING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE: DANVILLE, VA., 1963

## JANUARY 1

### Sit-In at Howard Johnson's.

Five members of the Danville Christian Progressive Association (DCPA) sit in at the local Howard Johnson's restaurant. Each is found guilty of trespassing and fined \$100.

## MARCH 26

### King Speaks in Danville.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., speaks at the Danville City Auditorium to a crowd of 2,500 at an event organized by the DCPA.

## MAY 31

### Demonstrations Begin Peacefully.

Rev. Lawrence Campbell and Rev. A. I. Dunlap, leaders of the DCPA, organize and lead demonstrations. No arrests are made; the press ignores the event.

## JUNE 5

### Occupation and Ouster at City Hall.

On June 5, police oust 125 demonstrators who march into City Hall and the City Manager's Office; five are arrested.

## JUNE 6

### Judge Aiken Issues Temporary Injunction.

Two hundred demonstrators march to the Municipal Building. Corporation Court Judge Archibald Aiken issues a temporary injunction, later made permanent, vastly limiting the scope of demonstrations.

## JUNE 7

### Special Grand Jury Indicts DCPA Leaders.

A special grand jury, called by Judge Aiken, indicts three leaders of the DCPA—Lawrence Campbell, A. I. Dunlap, and Julius Adams—under the 1859 “John Brown” statute outlawing conspiracy “to incite the colored population of the State to acts of violence and war against the white population”; bail is set at \$5,000 each.

## JUNE 7-8

### DCPA Leaders Call SCLC and SNCC.

Faced with arrests, indictments, and an injunction, DCPA leaders call the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to ask for assistance. Before the summer is over, SCLC will send its top leadership to Danville, and fifteen SNCC workers will come to assist in the Danville movement.

## JUNE 10

### Bloody Monday.

Demonstrations begin in the morning; police make arrests, hose down demonstrators, and jail about fifty. That evening, Rev. Hildreth McGhee leads a peaceful prayer vigil to protest the arrests early in the day, and police and firemen react by attacking protesters with billy clubs and fire hoses. The day becomes infamous as “Bloody Monday.”

## JUNE 11

### Council Enacts Ordinance.

City council enacts an ordinance to limit the time, place, and size of picketing and demonstrations.

## JUNE 21

### Grand Jury Indicts More Leaders.

The grand jury indicts ten more civil rights leaders under the 1859 statute, including officials of the SCLC's Virginia state chapter and SNCC leaders.



Dr. Martin Luther King speaks at High Street Baptist Church on July 11.

## JULY 11

### King Comes to Danville.

Dr. King speaks to a large gathering at High Street Baptist Church. In an eloquent speech, he notes the brutality of Danville police and commends the courage of local protesters.

## JULY 17

### SNCC Protest at Dan River Mills.

The New York affiliate of SNCC stages a 100-person protest at Dan River Mills' sales office in New York to urge the hiring and promotion of more African Americans and the use of corporate power to force the city to accede to the protesters' demands.

## AUGUST 11

### N.Y. Times Cites Danville's Defense Tactics.

The *New York Times* recognizes white authorities in Danville for “a defense strategy [against civil rights protesters] that is among the most unyielding, ingenious, legalistic, and effective of any city in the South.”

## AUGUST 25

### Schools Integrate.

Eleven African-American students enter the Danville public schools the week of August 25 under order of the State Pupil Placement Board. The only incident is a minor traffic jam, caused one day by rain.

## AUGUST 28

### March on Washington.

The March on Washington draws 250,000 people. John Lewis, president of SNCC, closes his speech by warning that, if Congress does not pass “meaningful” civil rights legislation, SNCC will march “through the streets of Jackson, through the streets of Danville, through the streets of Cambridge, through the streets of Birmingham.”



Civil rights protesters march from Bible Way Church to the Municipal Building.

LEON TOWNSEND, DANVILLE REGISTER

## SEPTEMBER 24

### SCLC Convention Opens in Richmond.

The seventh annual SCLC convention opens in Richmond. King takes the opportunity of being on Virginia soil to announce publicly that Danville would be SCLC's next target, and that a task force would be heading to the city soon. “Success in Danville will do much for the civil rights movement,” he says.

sending them to Danville. Andrew Young, another SCLC lieutenant, reports to Dr. King that things are picking up.

## NOVEMBER 12

### Fair Employment Policy.

Five members of city council, after meeting with African-American leaders, agree to put the fair employment policy on record and to hold conferences when differences occur, meeting two of the protest leaders' demands.

## NOVEMBER 15

### Boycott Pinches.

The *Washington Post* reports that an African-American boycott resulted in the loss of \$90,000 in sales that year, and that almost all major department stores now employ African Americans.

## NOVEMBER 16

### King Speaks at High Street.

Dr. King shares the platform at High Street Baptist Church with an avowed Nazi who tries to interrupt his speech, only to have the SCLC leader let him have his say.

## NOVEMBER 17

### King Vows to Return.

Dr. King flies back to Atlanta, but vows, “We are going to be here indefinitely,” referring to a task force of about twenty people who had moved into Danville. He says he will return to heal a rift that had arisen between DCPA and the local NAACP.

## NOVEMBER 21

### 'We Mean Business'.

Dr. King returns and speaks at High Street Baptist Church again, although he doesn't set a date for demonstrations, he declares, “We mean business.”

## NOVEMBER 22

### Kennedy Is Shot.

As Rev. C. T. Vivian, SCLC director of affiliates, prepares to send teams into white Danville neighborhoods to talk about the immorality of segregation, news arrives that President John F. Kennedy has been shot, and, out of a sense of propriety, the SCLC abandons its Danville effort.



CORBIS AND CORBIS

Judge Aiken, as a student at U.Va.'s School of Law.



MAGNUM

DANNY LYON

At High Street Baptist Church, SNCC workers train protesters in non-violent techniques.



MAGNUM

DANNY LYON

John Lewis, SNCC president, threatens more demonstrations in Danville, among other places, unless Congress passes significant civil rights legislation.

*In the long narrative of the civil rights movement, the Danville protests—like many of those in 1963—helped bring attention to the struggle of African Americans to gain their full rights, leading to the national momentum that played a role in the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights*

*Act and led ultimately to the end of segregation. Significant gains were made in Danville the fall of 1963: African Americans registered to vote for the first time, despite the poll tax, and the city hired an African-American policeman and adopted a fair employment policy.*

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